UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Commissioner for Patents
United States Patent and Trademark Office
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

SHUMAKER LOOP
& KENDRICK
101 E. KENNEDY
SUITE 2800
TAMPA FL 33672-0609

COPY MAILED

SEP 28 2009

OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of :
Laghi :
Application No. 10/711,077 : DECISION
Filed: 20 August, 2004 :
Attorney Docket No. A34800-114077-59 :

This is a decision on the petition filed on 25 September, 2009, for revival of an application abandoned due to unintentional delay under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b).

The petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) is **GRANTED**.

As to the Allegations
of Unintentional Delay

The requirements of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) are the petition and fee therefor, a reply, a proper statement of unintentional delay under the regulation, and, where applicable, a terminal disclaimer and fee. (However, it does not appear that a terminal disclaimer and fee are due here.)

Petitioners' attentions always are directed to the guidance in the Commentary at MPEP §711.03(c)(II).

BACKGROUND

The record reflects as follows:

Petitioner failed to reply timely and properly to the non-final Office action mailed on 1 November, 2007, with reply due under absent an extension of time on or before 1 February, 2008.

The application went abandoned by operation of law after midnight 1 February, 2008.

The Office mailed the Notice of Abandonment 12 May, 2008.

On 15 June, 2009, Petitioner filed, *inter alia*, a petition (with fee) pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b), with a reply in the form of an amendment and made the statement of unintentional delay.[1] (The request and fee for extension of time filed after expiration of the statutory period of reply was not proper and was refunded.) Petitioner provided no explanation for the extended period of abandonment—sixteen (16) months since abandonment and thirteen (13) months since Notice thereof, and Petitioner was reminded that an explanation of the delay was required with any renewed petition. The petition was dismissed on 18 September, 2009.

On 25 September, 2009, Petitioner renewed the petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b), and, having made a showing as to the history of the delay herein, completed submission as to the instant petition.

The record (including the petitions filed on 15 June and 25 September, 2009) does not necessitate a finding that the delay between midnight 1 February, 2008 (date of abandonment), and 25 September, 2009(date of filing of grantable petition), was not unintentional.

Rather, the Patent and Trademark Office is relying in this matter on the duty of candor and good faith of Petitioner (Laghi) and Counsel Robert S. Pippenger (Reg. No. 59,008) when accepting Petitioner's representation that the delay in filing the response was unintentional.[2]

The availability of applications and application papers online to applicants/practitioners who diligently associate their Customer Number with the respective application(s) now provides an applicant/practitioner on-demand information as to events/transactions in an application.

Out of an abundance of caution, Petitioners always are reminded that those registered to practice and all others who make representations before the Office **must** inquire into the underlying facts of representations made to the Office and support averments with the appropriate documentation–since all owe to the Office the continuing duty to disclose.[3]

---

[1] Petitioner was reminded that It was not apparent whether the person signing the statement of unintentional delay was in a position to have firsthand or direct knowledge of the facts and circumstances of the delay at issue; Petitioner must make such an inquiry; if such inquiry resulted in the discovery that it is not correct that the entire delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) was unintentional, Petitioner must notify the Office.

[2] See Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure, 62 Fed. Reg. at 53160 and 53178, 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 88 and 103 (responses to comments 64 and 109)(applicant obligated under 37 C.F.R. §10.18 to inquire into the underlying facts and circumstances when providing the statement required by 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) to the Patent and Trademark Office).

[3] See supplement of 17 June, 1999. The Patent and Trademark Office is relying on petitioner's duty of candor and good faith and accepting a statement made by Petitioner. See Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure, 62 Fed. Reg. at 53160 and 53178, 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 88 and 103 (responses to comments 64 and 109)(applicant obligated under 37 C.F.R. §10.18 to inquire into the underlying facts and circumstances when providing statements to the Patent and Trademark Office).

STATUTES, REGULATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Congress has authorized the Commissioner to "revive an application if the delay is shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner to have been "unavoidable." 35 U.S.C. §133 (1994).[4] The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) and (b) set forth the requirements for a Petitioner to revive a previously unavoidably or unintentionally, respectively, abandoned application under this congressional grant of authority.

Unintentional delays are those that do not satisfy the very strict statutory and regulatory requirements of unavoidable delay, and also, by definition, are not intentional.[5]))

As to Allegations of
Unintentional Delay

The requirements of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) are the petition and fee therefor, a reply, a proper statement of unintentional delay under the regulation, and, where applicable, a terminal disclaimer and fee.

It appears that the requirements under the rule have been satisfied.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, the petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) is **granted**.

The instant application is released to the Technology Center/AU3751 for further processing in due course.

Petitioner may find it beneficial to view Private PAIR within a fortnight of the instant decision to ensure that the revival has been acknowledged by the TC/AU in response to this decision. It is noted that all inquiries with regard to that change in status need be directed to the TC/AU where that change of status must be effected—that does not occur in the Office of Petitions.

---

[4] 35 U.S.C. §133 provides:

35 U.S.C. §133 Time for prosecuting application.

Upon failure of the applicant to prosecute the application within six months after any action therein, of which notice has been given or mailed to the applicant, or within such shorter time, not less than thirty days, as fixed by the Commissioner in such action, the application shall be regarded as abandoned by the parties thereto, unless it be shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that such delay was unavoidable.

[5] Therefore, by example, an unintentional delay in the reply might occur if the reply and transmittal form are to be prepared for shipment by the US Postal Service, but other pressing matters distract one's attention and the mail is not timely deposited for shipment.

Telephone inquiries regarding this decision may be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3214—it is noted, however, that all practice before the Office is in writing (see: 37 C.F.R. §1.2[6]) and the proper authority for action on any matter in this regard are the statutes (35 U.S.C.), regulations (37 C.F.R.) and the commentary on policy (MPEP). Therefore, no telephone discussion may be controlling or considered authority for Petitioner's action(s).

/John J. Gillon, Jr./
John J. Gillon, Jr.
Senior Attorney
Office of Petitions

[6] The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.2 provide:

§1.2 Business to be transacted in writing.

All business with the Patent and Trademark Office should be transacted in writing. The personal attendance of applicants or their attorneys or agents at the Patent and Trademark Office is unnecessary. The action of the Patent and Trademark Office will be based exclusively on the written record in the Office. No attention will be paid to any alleged oral promise, stipulation, or understanding in relation to which there is disagreement or doubt.